Nationalism and the Start of WWI

World War one was a very large war that took place in Europe and involved many countries, in and out of Europe. The spark that ignited the blood bath was a combination of various political and economical conflicts and disturbances that sucked in many European nations, either directly or indirectly. The proverbial flames wouldn’t be put out for four long, deadly years after the initial battle cries.

There were a few main causes of the war: Nationalism, rivalries, militarism, and imperialism. All of them were, for the most part, as substantial as the next.

Nationalism is extreme pride in one’s country. This was an extremely important factor in the causes of World War one because certain countries like Germany were infusing the whole German population with an overwhelming pride for their country. Because of nationalism, there was a large amount of enthusiasm and confidence, which translated into feelings of dominance and deservingness, especially in the then-recent world super power Germany.

Militarism is the aggressive military preparations for offensive or defensive actions, including stock piling weapons and drafting soldiers. This was a critical cause for the war. Germany and its allies were the primary countries involved in militarism.

Imperialism was the desire for the territorial expansion of a nation. Germany felt like they were deserving of more land for their country. They showed this on more occasions than one, also showing this desire in World War two.

“The Volunteer”, a poem by Herbert Asquith, is a wonderful example of how war is unfortunate, but also can be justified. The poem tells of a man who lives a dull life, so he joins the army; while unfortunately he dies, he dies not in vain but for his country. While some might view this poem as a glorification of war, seeing as the main character died satisfied, others might see it as an example of how country leaders and propaganda pushed positive, prideful feelings about war at the youth and general population in order to make fighting in a war seem like a glorious, necessary service to the country. The reality of the situation, though, was that war was an absolutely horrible thing and is a waste of innocent, ‘brain-washed’ lives.